

AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL Faculty Favorites
Summer Reading 2016



AHS students will select one of these books to read over the summer. Each book has been chosen by members of the faculty/staff who will conduct a discussion group with students who read the book. **All Faculty Favorites Book Discussions will be held on Friday, September 9, 2016 regardless of whether a student has English all year, first semester, or second semester.** Students do not have to write a journal during the summer, although they may wish to take notes to remember the book. All students will be told where they will report to have their book discussion. At the beginning of each book discussion, students will be given a brief assessment based on the book to ensure that they read the book. **These assessments and participation in the discussion will count as a test grade in the student's English class.**

Each book has been recommended since it appeals to readers who like certain styles or topics. They are books that are enjoyable to read. Students may buy copies of books or borrow a title through inter-library loan.

1. Title: *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*

Author: Anne Tyler

Promotional Paragraph: "Pearl Tull is nearing the end of her life but not her memory. Ever since 1944 when her husband left her, she has raised her three very different children on her own. Now grown, they have gathered together-- with anger, with hope, and with a beautiful, harsh, and dazzling story to tell" (amazon.com).

2. Title: *Brady vs. Manning: The Untold Story of the Rivalry that Transformed the NFL*

Author: Gary Myers

Promotional Paragraph: "In this extraordinary book, veteran NFL correspondent Gary Myers tackles this subject from every angle and with unprecedented access and insight, drawing on a huge number of never-before-heard interviews with Brady and Manning, their coaches, their families, and those who have played with them and against them. The result is a remarkable collection of the most entertaining and revealing stories ever told about Peyton and Tom, from how they developed their vastly different leadership styles, to the unlikely friendship they've built over the years, to their respective exploits as locker room pranksters. Wildly entertaining and deeply thought-provoking, *Brady vs Manning* is essential reading for anyone who truly wants to understand these extraordinary players" (Amazon.com).

3. Title: *All the Truth That's in Me*

Author: Julie Berry

Promotional paragraph: Four years ago, Judith and her best friend disappeared from their small town. Two years ago, only Judith returned, permanently mutilated and ignored by those who were once her friends and family. The body of her best friend Lottie was found washed down a stream. Only Judith knows the truth of what happened to Lottie, but her muteness leaves her an outcast in the village, even from her own mother, and the truth stays bottled up inside her. The author purposely sets the story in an unnamed time and place so that the protagonist's anguish and the town's mystery are the focus, but the reader senses that the backdrop is Colonial times. The way the story reads takes getting used to (choppy, short pieces of personal writing), but it becomes a page-turner. Told from Judith's troubled perspective, the story unwinds in mini-chapters that peel back what happened and gradually allows Judith to find her voice again and to reconcile her thoughts for a boy named Lucas who's owned her heart as long as she can remember. (Taken in part from *Amazon.com*)

4. Title: *Wide Awake: A Buddhist Guide for Teens*

Author: Diana Winston

Promotional Paragraph: Switching between anecdotes of her own journey in Buddhism and advice on how teens can apply the Buddha's teachings to their lives, Winston offers a personal and thoughtful introduction to Buddhist thought and practice. The fundamental tenets of Buddhism are introduced through the lens of adolescence: finding karma at a high-school basketball game or promising that metta (loving-kindness) can free teens from anger toward siblings and parents (a miracle, indeed). Winston frequently quotes from teens she has met in her work at a Buddhist center in California, showing what they have learned from Buddhism on such subjects as skipping school....

For everyone looking for self-help, self-esteem, and self-awareness, this book offers advice on:

- Discovering truth in a world of hype
- Finding peace amid the ups and downs of life
- Accepting ourselves
- Working with difficult emotions
- How to meditate
- Dealing with temptations and making the right decisions about sex and drugs
- Advice on volunteering, working for peace, and protecting the environment (Taken in part from *Amazon.com*)

5. Title: *Mind Gym: An Athlete's Guide to Inner Excellence*

Author: Gary Mack with David Casstevens

Promotional paragraph: In *Mind Gym*, noted sports psychology consultant Gary Mack explains how your mind influences your performance on the field or on the court as much as your physical skill does, if not more so. Through forty accessible lessons and inspirational anecdotes from prominent athletes--many of whom he has worked with--you will learn the same techniques and exercises Mack uses to help elite athletes build mental "muscle." *Mind Gym* will give you the "head edge" over the competition. (Taken in part from *Amazon.com*)

"Mind Gym hits a home run. If you want to build mental muscle for the major leagues, read this book." -- Ken Griffey, Jr., Major League MVP

"A great read that helps you understand the importance that your mind plays in reaching the top." -- Michele Timms, WNBA All-Star and Olympic silver-medal winner

6. Title: *The Admissions*

Author: Meg Mitchell Moore

Promotional Paragraph: The Hawthorne family has it all: great jobs, a beautiful house in one of the most affluent areas of northern California, and three charming kids with perfectly straight teeth. Then comes eldest daughter Angela's senior year of high school.

Suddenly, everyone is floundering. As Angela writes and rewrites her application for Harvard—her father's alma mater—and struggles to maintain her position as valedictorian, Nora Hawthorne's career hits a rough patch, taking her away from a newly distracted husband and uncharacteristically anxious younger daughters. And as the secrets everyone has been keeping will come to light, it sets the family on a final collision course that will force them to reevaluate, with humor and heart, the value of achievement. (Amazon.com)

7. Title: *Hole in My Life*

Author: Jack Gantos

Promotional Paragraph: In the summer of 1971, Jack Gantos was an aspiring writer looking for adventure, cash for college tuition, and a way out of a dead-end job. For ten thousand dollars, he recklessly agreed to help sail a sixty-foot yacht loaded with a ton of hashish from the Virgin Islands to New York City, where he and his partners sold the drug until federal agents caught up with them. For his part in the conspiracy, Gantos was sentenced to serve up to six years in

prison. In *Hole in My Life*, this prizewinning author of over thirty books for young people confronts the period of struggle and confinement that marked the end of his own youth. On the surface, the narrative tumbles from one crazed moment to the next as Gantos pieces together the story of his restless final year of high school, his short-lived career as a criminal, and his time in prison. But running just beneath the action is the story of how Gantos – once he was locked up in a small, yellow-walled cell – moved from wanting to be a writer to writing, and how dedicating himself more fully to the thing he most wanted to do helped him endure and ultimately overcome the worst experience of his life. (Amazon.com)

8. Title: *The Girl With all the Gifts*

Author: M.R. Carey

Promotional Paragraph: Melanie is a very special girl. Dr. Caldwell calls her "our little genius."

Every morning, Melanie waits in her cell to be collected for class. When they come for her, Sergeant Parks keeps his gun pointing at her while two of his people strap her into the wheelchair. She thinks they don't like her. She jokes that she won't bite, but they don't laugh.

Melanie loves school. She loves learning about spelling and sums and the world outside the classroom and the children's cells. She tells her favorite teacher all the things she'll do when she grows up. Melanie doesn't know why this makes Miss Justineau look sad. (amazon.com)

After reading this promotional paragraph you would think that Melanie was just an ordinary young girl, As I did when I began to read the story; but she is very, very different. I will not give away the whole story, it really needs to reveal itself (but shhhh.. Dare I use the Z word??). There are many parallels made within the story to Greek mythology starting with the name of the book: *The Girl with all the Gifts* is the greek translation for Pandora. Will this new world survive??

9. Title: *Delivering the Truth*

Author: Edith Maxwell

Promotional Paragraph: For Quaker midwife Rose Carroll, life in Amesbury, Massachusetts, provides equal measure of joy and tribulation. She delights in attending to the needs of mothers and newborns even as she mourns the recent death of her sister. Likewise, Rose enjoys the giddy feelings that come from being courted by a handsome doctor, but a suspicious fire and two murders leave her fearing for the well-being of her loved ones.

Driven by her desire for safety and justice, Rose Carroll begins asking questions related to the crimes. Consulting with her friends and neighbors - including the famous Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier - Rose draws on her strengths as a counselor and problem solver in trying to bring the perpetrators to light.

10. Title: *The Raven Boys*

Author: Maggie Stiefvater

Promotional Paragraph: "There are only two reasons a non-seer would see a spirit on St. Mark's Eve, Blue. Either you're his true love," Neeve said, "or you killed him. Every year, Blue Sargent stands next to her clairvoyant mother as the soon-to-be dead walk past. Blue never sees them--until this year, when a boy emerges from the dark and speaks to her.

His name is Gansey, a rich student at Aglionby, the local private school. Blue has a policy of staying away from Aglionby boys. Known as Raven Boys, they can only mean trouble.

But Blue is drawn to Gansey, in a way she can't entirely explain. He is on a quest that has encompassed three other Raven Boys: Adam, the scholarship student who resents the privilege around him; Ronan, the fierce soul whose emotions range from anger to despair; and Noah, the taciturn watcher who notices many things but says very little.

For as long as she can remember, Blue has been warned that she will cause her true love to die. She doesn't believe in true love, and never thought this would be a problem. But as her life becomes caught up in the strange and sinister world of the Raven Boys, she's not so sure anymore.

11. Title: *The Running Dream*

Author: Wendelin Van Draanen

Promotional Paragraph: Inspiring, and at turns both heartbreaking and heartwarming, *The Running Dream* is a unique and powerful story. Jessica's life changes in an instant as the result of a tragic bus accident which resulted in the death of a teammate and the loss of Jessica's leg. Having her right leg amputated below the knee is a crushing blow to a girl who defines herself as a runner and who had a promising future in track and field. Jessica is tough, scrappy, and immensely likable as she struggles with depression, anguish, severe pain, and a long road back to her former life.

12. Title: *Waking Up White*

Author: Debby Irving

Promotional Paragraph: Debby Irving's powerful *Waking Up White* opens a rare window on how white Americans are socialized. Irving's focus on the mechanics of racism operating in just one life--her own--may lead white readers to reconsider the roots of their own perspectives -- and their role in dismantling old myths. Readers of color will no doubt find the view through Irving's window fascinating, and telling.

13. Title: *Curveball - The Year I Lost My Grip*

Author: Jordan Sonnenblick

Promotional Paragraph: There's nothing All-Star pitcher Peter Friedman loves more than baseball. Most kids are nervous about starting high school but Peter is sure his amazing arm will make him an all-around stud. Then a pitching accident over the summer ruins his arm. He tells his friends he'll be back by spring training but will he. If not, what will he do then? Then he meets a girl in photography class. Will that work out or be just another disaster of his freshman year?

14. Title: *Code of Honor*

Author: Alan Gratz

Promotional Paragraph: Kamran Smith has it all. He's the star of the football team, dates the most popular girl in school, and can't wait to enlist in the Army like his big brother, Darius. Although Kamran's family hails from Iran, Kamran has always felt 100% American. Accepted. And then everything implodes. Darius is accused of being a terrorist. Kamran refuses to believe it, but the evidence is there -- Darius has been filmed making threats against his country, hinting at an upcoming deadly attack. Kamran's friends turn on him -- suddenly, in their eyes, he's a terrorist, too. Kamran knows it's up to him to clear his brother's name. In a race against time, Kamran must piece together a series of clues and codes that will lead him to Darius -- and the truth. But is it a truth Kamran is ready to face? And is he putting his own life at risk?

15. Title: *Lost on Planet China: One Man's Attempt to Understand the World's Most Mystifying Nation*

Author: J. Maarten Troost

Promotional Paragraph: Maarten Troost has charmed legions of readers with his laugh-out-loud tales of wandering the remote islands of the South Pacific. When the travel bug hit again, he decided to go big-time, taking on the world's most populous and intriguing nation. In *Lost on Planet China*, Troost escorts readers on a rollicking journey through the new beating heart of the modern world, from the megalopolises of Beijing and Shanghai to the Gobi Desert and the hinterlands of Tibet.

Lost on Planet China finds Troost dodging deadly drivers in Shanghai; eating Yak in Tibet; deciphering restaurant menus (offering local favorites such as Cattle Penis with Garlic); visiting with Chairman Mao (still dead, very orange); and hiking (with 80,000 other people) up Tai Shan, China's most revered mountain. But in addition to his trademark gonzo adventures, the book also delivers a telling look at a vast and complex country on the brink of transformation that will soon shape the way we all work, live, and think. As Troost shows, while we may be familiar with Yao Ming or dim sum or

the cheap, plastic products that line the shelves of every store, the real China remains a world—indeed, a planet--unto itself. (amazon.com)

16. Title: *When Breath Becomes Air*

Author: Paul Kalanithy

Promotional Paragraph: At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade's worth of training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his wife had imagined evaporated. *When Breath Becomes Air* chronicles Kalanithi's transformation from a naïve medical student "possessed," as he wrote, "by the question of what, given that all organisms die, makes a virtuous and meaningful life" into a neurosurgeon at Stanford working in the brain, the most critical place for human identity, and finally into a patient and new father confronting his own mortality.

What makes life worth living in the face of death? What do you do when the future, no longer a ladder toward your goals in life, flattens out into a perpetual present? What does it mean to have a child, to nurture a new life as another fades away? These are some of the questions Kalanithi wrestles with in this profoundly moving, exquisitely observed memoir.

Paul Kalanithi died in March 2015, while working on this book, yet his words live on as a guide and a gift to us all. "I began to realize that coming face to face with my own mortality, in a sense, had changed nothing and everything," he wrote. "Seven words from Samuel Beckett began to repeat in my head: 'I can't go on. I'll go on.'" *When Breath Becomes Air* is an unforgettable, life-affirming reflection on the challenge of facing death and on the relationship between doctor and patient, from a brilliant writer who became both. (Amazon.com)

17. Title: *Beauty Queens*

Author: Libba Bray

Promotional Paragraph: From bestselling, Printz Award-winning author Libba Bray, a desert island classic. Survival. Of the fittest.

The fifty contestants in the Miss Teen Dream Pageant thought this was going to be a fun trip to the beach, where they could parade in their state-appropriate costumes and compete in front of the cameras. But sadly, their airplane had another idea, crashing on a desert island and leaving the survivors stranded with little food, little water, and practically no eyeliner. What's a beauty queen to do? Continue to practice for the talent portion of the program - or wrestle snakes to the ground? Get a perfect tan - or learn to run wild? And what should happen when the sexy pirates show up?

Welcome to the heart of non-exfoliated darkness. Your tour guide? None other than Libba Bray, the hilarious, sensational, Printz Award-winning author of *A Great and Terrible Beauty* and *Going Bovine*. The result is a novel that will make you laugh, make you think, and make you never see beauty the same way again (amazon.com).

18. Title: *Go Ask Alice*

Author: Anonymous

Promotional Paragraph: "The torture and hell of adolescence has rarely been captured as clearly as it is in this classic diary by an anonymous, addicted teen. Lonely, awkward, and under extreme pressure from her "perfect" parents, "Anonymous" swings madly between optimism and despair. When one of her new friends spikes her drink with LSD, this diarist begins a frightening journey into darkness. The drugs take the edge off her loneliness and self-hate, but they also turn her life into a nightmare of exalting highs and excruciating lows. Although there is still some question as to whether this diary is real or fictional, there is *no question* that it has made a profound impact on millions of readers during the

more than 25 years it has been in print...*Go Ask Alice* still offers a jolting chronicle of a teenager's life spinning out of control.”-- Amazon.com Review

January 24th

After you've had it, there isn't even life without drugs....

It started when she was served a soft drink laced with LSD in a dangerous party game. Within months, she was hooked, trapped in a downward spiral that took her from her comfortable home and loving family to the mean streets of an unforgiving city.

19. Title: *The Infinite Sea (Fifth Wave Series #2)*

Author: Rick Yancey

Promotional Paragraph:

The riveting follow-up to the New York Times bestselling *The 5th Wave*, hailed as “wildly entertaining.”

How do you rid the Earth of seven billion humans? Rid the humans of their humanity.

Surviving the first four waves was nearly impossible. Now Cassie Sullivan finds herself in a new world, a world in which the fundamental trust that binds us together is gone. As the 5th Wave rolls across the landscape, Cassie, Ben, and Ringer are forced to confront the Others’ ultimate goal: the extermination of the human race.

Cassie and her friends haven’t seen the depths to which the Others will sink, nor have the Others seen the heights to which humanity will rise, in the ultimate battle between life and death, hope and despair, love and hate.

“This gut-wrenching sequel to *The 5th Wave* careens on a violent course of nonstop action.”—Publishers Weekly, starred review

20. Title: *The Storyteller*

Author: Jodi Picoult

Promotional Paragraph: Sage Singer is a baker, a loner, until she befriends an old man who's particularly beloved in her community. Josef Weber is everyone's favorite retired teacher and Little League coach. One day he asks Sage for a favor: to kill him. Shocked, Sage refuses—and then he confesses his darkest secret – he deserves to die because he had been a Nazi SS guard. And Sage's grandmother is a Holocaust survivor. How do you react to evil living next door? Can someone who's committed truly heinous acts ever atone with subsequent good behavior? Should you offer forgiveness to someone if you aren't the party who was wronged? And, if Sage even considers the request, is it revenge...or justice?

21. Title: *The Tomb That Ruth Built: A Mickey Rawlings Mystery*

Author: Troy Soos

Promotional Paragraph:

The Roaring Twenties: In 1923 Yankee Stadium opens and Babe Ruth is about to lead the team to its first world’s championship. But the season gets off to an ominous start when a murdered bootlegger is found buried in the new ballpark. Utility infielder Mickey Rawlings, in his first year with the Yankees, is called to investigate and soon gets caught in a crossfire of rival gangsters. *The Tomb That Ruth Built* is the seventh in Troy Soos’s acclaimed Mickey Rawlings baseball mystery series (rockinbearreviews.com).

“Equal parts baseball and mystery are the perfect proportion.” Robert B. Parker